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Neglected Arabia

WOMEN'S NUMBER

Contents

The Arabian Mission

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Neglected Arabia

Missionary News and Letters

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THE ARABIAN MISSION

The Cinema

Mrs. Jas. Cantine

A missionary was sitting by her grate fire one evening late in December, thinking over the experiences of the year. As they passed across her mind one by one they seemed like so many moving pictures, and she saw each one as clearly as if she were living it over again. Some recalled happy hours spent with fellow-workers and other congenial companions. Among these was one in which she saw the faces of two friends from home, who had come to bring greetings from the Church and the Board, and to cheer and encourage the workers in the field. The missionaries of the Station were gathered together to meet the guests, and one had but to look around the group to see how they enjoyed and appreciated this visit from across the seas. As she looked at the picture she recalled the kindly interest these friends had shown in the work of the Mission; how they had entered into the hopes and plans, and shared in the disappointments and discouragements, as well as in the joys. And she felt that their coming had been a blessing to those on the field and had bound them closer to the Church at home.

As the picture faded away it was followed by another which also brought pleasant memories. It was Christmas day, and she saw the missionaries of the Station, with two friends from California, seated around a sumptuous table. There was "oyster soub," so the Arabian menu said (there is no "p" in this language of the angels), a turkey that had come all the way from Baghdad, "mince bie, blum budding," and many other dainties not often seen on missionaries' tables. Reminiscences of the past, stories of the present and prophecies for the future, added much to the enjoyment, and made it an occasion long to be remembered. Then she saw, a few hours later, on this same Christmas day, a group sitting around the fire drinking tea. A poor woman with three little children all dressed in rags and shivering with the cold, were huddling close to the grate to get warm. They partook greedily of all that was offered to them, for they were hungry, and that on Christmas day, when in our churches we sing "He hath filled the hungry with good things." She remembered how thankful she had been to

the Sewing Guild for the nice warm garments which had come just in time, so that this poor woman and her little children might have warm clothes on this cold Christmas evening.

Next came a picture of the waiting room at the hospital on a clinic morning. It was full of women and children, who, as soon as she entered, began telling her their ailments and asking for medicine. How disappointed they were because she was only an ordinary Khatun (lady), and not the Hakima (doctor), who was going to cure them. Suddenly one of the servants calls out, "Fatima, Fatima, quickly; the doctor wants you." At that they all cheer up, and "The doctor has come, the doctor is here," they say; "she has just sent for Fatima. Be still, you noisy ones, or we can not hear when she calls for us," and they crowd around the door of the office to be ready when their turn comes. Warda, the dear old darky woman, was there, too. She has been so happy since that dreadful tumor was removed, and says that she can never repay the kindness of her "Mother" and "Uncle," as she affectionately calls the doctors. She comes regularly to church, now that she is able to walk, and often brings other women with her so that they also may hear about the Christ who loves them.

Then there were several pictures of visits in Arab homes; some of them the poorest and smallest of mat huts, others the largest and grandest dwellings in the town. Sometimes the visitors were sitting on greasy mats surrounded by ragged, dirty women and children, whose fleas jumped about and came much too near for comfort. At other times they sat on white-covered couches, talking with pretty, attractive women as neat and clean as their houses. In one place they were served with black coffee in tiny cups not much bigger than a thimble; in another they were given tea in the largest of mustache cups, "for," they said, "we want to give you what you are used to in your own homes." In one house she saw herself and a Turkish lady eating from a tray containing rice and chicken and all the accessories of a big dinner, the Turkish lady trying to eat "a la Frangi," and the missionary "a la Turki." It had been rather amusing. There were pleasant things to recall of that day, as of many others like it—there had been opportunities to speak about Christ and to seek to persuade the women that it is a true and faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that He came into the world to save sinners.

Other pictures followed in rapid succession. She saw the girls' school at its very beginning, when no one could tell what its future would be; and again at the close of the year when the pupils studied and recited in a way which spoke volumes for the daily toil and perseverance of those who had instructed them. She saw a house well known to all the missionaries, where they used to go on Communion Sunday to have a service with a dear old lady who is too feeble to come to church. She saw a certain day when they had been gladdened by the arrival of a new worker to join their circle. Her bright face has already become known and loved by many in the Station, and especially by the sick in the hospital. She saw an attractive picture of the Sunday school on review Sunday, when the children were telling what they remembered of the lessons of the year. They recited psalms, going through even the long, hard Twenty-seventh Psalm with almost no mistakes.

There were nearly twenty of them—clean, bright-eyed, lovable boys and girls, so keen on their lessons that it had been a pleasure to teach them. One of them was missing, and as they sang their favorite hymn, "Around the Throne of God Above, Ten Thousand Children Stand," they thought of little Ibrahim, who, a few months ago, had gone to join that happy band.

She saw, on a Sunday afternoon during the annual meeting, the entire Mission assembled in the new chapel for its dedication. The building, in contrast with the room used for many years, was light, roomy, and appropriate. The liturgy was beautiful and impressive, and the singing of the hymn, "We Love Thy Church, O God," by so many voices was inspiring. Altogether it was an uplifting service.

And so the Cinema went on, showing picture after picture, until finally there was another Christmas Eve, with a prettily decorated tree lighted by colored candles, under which were grouped little gift parcels tied with red ribbon, bags containing oranges, candy, and popcorn; dolls for the little girls and drums for the boys. The children were reciting Christmas carols and singing lustily, "Where is the King, O where, O where?" But the best of all was the Christmas spirit which had prompted each one to do his best to make others happy.

As the missionary went over these memories of the year she felt that in spite of many failures and much that was sad and discouraging, it had nevertheless been a blessed year, full of God-given opportunities for service.

Maskat in Tears

Miss Fanny Lutton

Maskat was a whole city in tears on the day of mourning for the deceased Sultan. For some time previous to his death the place had been in a state of unrest. Inland tribes were giving trouble, and serious rumors were afloat about deposing the Ruler. Very important centers had been captured and the rebels were forging their way nearer to the citadel. Town after town surrendered and the Sultan was losing possessions and men. The inhabitants of Maskat city were thrown into a great state of alarm when the news came that the rebels were drawing near and Maskat would be taken. All the people who lived outside the city walls left their houses, and, taking their possessions with them, fled for protection within the gates. Shops in the bazaars were closed and trade was brought to a standstill. The British government then came to the Sultan's rescue, and their troops were stationed back of Matrah, which is the town at the almost natural mountain gateway between Maskat and inland Oman.

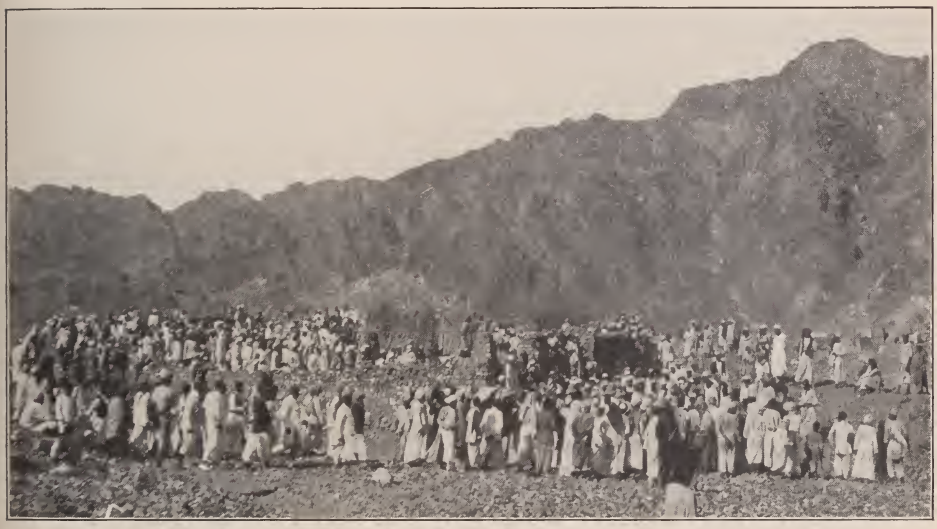
Now all this worry of rebellion must have been hard for the Sultan to bear, and he became seriously ill, and grave doubts were held out for his recovery. On Saturday morning I was startled by hearing loud cries. Some Arab women were with me at the time, and we all ran outside to ascertain the cause. The sound increased on all sides and the women exclaimed, "Oh, the Sultan is dead!" I shall never forget this sound of weeping. The cries spread and soon there was not

a house of great or small, rich and poor, where its dwellers were not shrieking and wailing; and the beating of their breasts resounded all over the place. Western people can form no idea of Oriental mourning. They shriek on the highways and byways, for not one dreams of mourning in secret or in solitude. Men left their work, shopkeepers closed their shops, and children came out on the streets. People were running hither and thither, and every one was in a wild state of confusion. Then, just as suddenly came the news, "The Sultan is still alive," and the people became calm as the report was verified. They told me afterward in the palace how the false report had come

THE SULTAN OF MASKAT

out. The Sultan had been unconscious for many hours, and early on Saturday morning they thought the end had come. Then those who were watching by him began to cry, and soon all the palace were shrieking and the cries spread all through the bazaars, and every one passed it on until every house took up the cry, and Maskat was literally in tears. I can fancy I hear some people saying: "Oh, how the Sultan must have been loved to have called forth such expressions of sorrow and mourning." But all their sorrow is just as prescribed as is their religion. The Sultan lingered all that day, and just near midnight passed away. His wife said to me afterward: "We did not cry then. We waited until daylight, and at five minutes past six we commenced

to cry." I could not help thinking how, even in his own home, they were guided by the clock for the time to begin to weep. In these hot countries the bodies are interred very soon after death, and at nine o'clock on Sunday morning the funeral procession passed through the city gates to the Royal cemetery. The two photographs of the funeral procession do not give a good idea of the vast concourse of people. As the bier was jolted from shoulder to shoulder of the men who were seeking merit by having a share in bearing the burden, the procession was greatly retarded. The loud shrieks and beating of breasts from such a concourse of people all along the route can never be effaced from memory. People were shrieking out, "Oh, father of the poor!" "Oh, father of the orphans!" "O, my Lord!" These cries never abated for a second, but were kept up until some actually lost their voices. I met a slave woman some days after the funeral and her voice had not yet returned.



FUNERAL OF THE SULTAN OF MASKAT

For three days after the Sultan's death his house was thrown open for rich and poor to pay their visits of condolence to the members of his household. The first night when I went I could not get round all the mourners, so I had to pay a second call the next day; for they would have been greatly slighted had I failed to see them. My entrance was the signal for a fresh outburst of cries. While seated near one of the slaves I watched her beat her head and breast and at times throw up both arms and cry out, "Oh, my beloved!" "Oh, my Lord!" "Oh, father of my child!" and then she began to scream out, "Oh, you hiccough!" She repeated this several times and it quite mystified me, until afterward I remembered that the night when I was talking with her the Sultan's daughter had told me her father had had the hiccough for two days before he died. It seemed to me as if every woman in Mas-

kat entered the palace, now a house of mourning. At times there was not room to stand or sit down, for every bit of space was taken up with visitors, and this lasted for three days. The final act was a feast prepared for all the visitors, and this was the last tribute to the memory of the departed Sultan.

A Trip to Amara

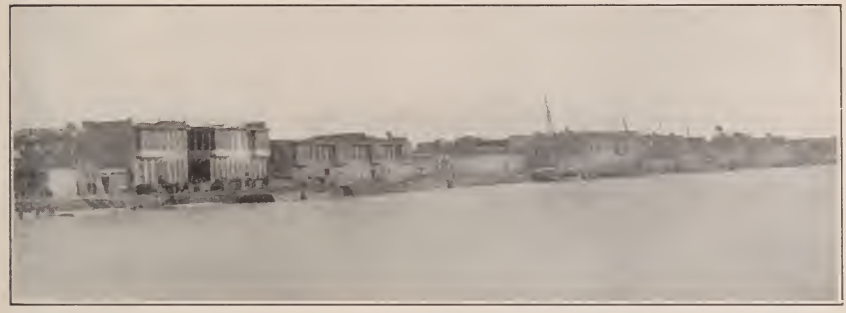
Mrs. H. R. L. Worrall

At ten forty-five A. M. word was brought that the river steamer would leave Busrah at one P. M. The question was, could we get packed and on board at that time? Knowing that things do not always move on schedule time in the East, we thought we could. At least we were at the ticket office at one, and were told that the boat would not leave for two hours. After exchanging Indian rupees for Turkish majedies we went on board. My husband used the time of waiting to go to the custom house to see if he could not get out the drugs bought for the trip. They had been two days there, and for long hours he had used all the known means at command to try to get them through. But two days' work is not long, really, for getting things out of Turkish customs. Unfortunately some new officials had come recently and the price of the necessary tips was not yet definitely known. So although apparently the actual business had been seen to, the boxes emptied, and a list of the drugs made, all the necessary red tape gone through with, the boxes nailed up again and all that was apparently needed was the signature, yet it seemed that nothing could be done in two hours to get the job finished. So he had to give up the idea of going properly supplied with drugs on this medical trip and trust to some small traveling cases of tabloids. The hope was that the native helper in Busrah, who had been with the doctor looking after this business, could see it through the next day, and the drugs could be sent up on the next steamer. The two hours of waiting proved to be four. It was hot and trying, and there seemed no cool spot anywhere, though it was already the middle of October. But finally at sunset we started, but it was too late to see once again the reputed site of the garden of Eden at the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates. But the river at Busrah and for miles above and below the city is beautiful always, and we enjoyed to the full the lovely groves of date palms. Then night settled down and it was time for dinner. This partaken of, we sat on deck a while, but as there were no lights and no moonlight, we soon retired for the night. The cabins were very small, each one contained one bunk. One had a washstand, the other none. Our dreams were not interrupted except occasionally when the barge on either side of the steamer would bump against the river bank at some narrow part of the winding river. At such times the gentle flowing of the water and the lapping on the banks soon lulled us to sleep again.

After two nights and a day we arrived at our destination. Amara is pleasantly situated on the banks of the Tigris. Beyond the boat landing is a bridge of boats. This is so arranged that if large Arab boats or river steamers wish to pass, a section of the bridge is swung

to the side and afterward chained again in place. An Arab lives in a hut on the rude planks covering the tops of the boats and stretched between. So he is ready to open the bridge day or night.

The river steamers are anchored very close to the shore. One simply walks over a plank from the iron barge of the steamer to the land. When one compares landing at Amara with that at Bahrein it is very simple. At Bahrein, the sea is so often rough. Sometimes the steamers anchor miles out from land. If the sea is rough it may take several hours to go to or from the steamer in a native sailboat. Even with good weather it needs an hour. If the tide is out one must mount a donkey with a native saddle, and to the new-comer it seems as if the next moment one would surely fall off. By the time one has safely arrived, one feels as if one would never wish to leave the shore again rather than have to go through the same experience. But at Amara, one steps off from the plank to the shore, goes up a short flight of steps, and, behold, you are on the main street. It seems as if most of the people of the town have come to see the arrival of the steamer. This is no doubt the event of the day at Amara. The Mission house is only



AMARA: OUT-STATION ON THE TIGRIS, 150 MILES FROM BUSRAH

one minute's walk from the landing. Entering the house, one goes up the narrow stairs to the two small living rooms and soon feels quite at home.

As Mr. Pennings, the pastor, was already occupying the Mission house, his Arab cook soon had tea and Arab bread for us. Then our plans were made. Mr. Pennings kindly offered to go to live with the colporteur, Sarkis, in his room and give us the use of the Mission house for the medical work. We were very grateful for this.

Soon after our arrival the sick began to hear that a doctor had come and gradually they came for treatment. We had taken no medical helper along and soon we were busy with patients. Day by day they increased till just before we left the total number of men, women and children patients in a day amounted to about a hundred. Yet we had only traveling boxes of tabloids and were often in difficulty to supply suitable remedies. We would tell the people that surely the drugs would come on the next steamer, but the time wore on and nothing came except word that the drugs could not be secured from the customs for any reasonable sum. A few days before we left, Dr. Bennett

kindly sent us a few drugs from his stock, for which we were very grateful.

Our quarters were very small to see so many patients. But the way we managed was this: At about seven thirty A. M., when we were quite ready, we would ask the servant boy how many patients were waiting downstairs. He would say about twelve or fifteen women and about the same number of men. I would tell him to bring all the women and children up at once, so that they would not have to wait among the men. The men would come up one at a time and be treated in the outer court. The women would be seen in our sitting room. I would read and explain some verses from the New Testament, and have prayer and sometimes a hymn. They listened well. Then I would write their names, give them a slip of paper with their number on and sometimes containing their prescription, but if it were a complicated case I kept a history paper with the treatment, history, diagnosis, etc., on it. Then I would give medicines to each patient, dismissing them one by one. Then I would ask the boy how many more there were waiting. He would say about a dozen. These would come up and I would try to have a prayer service with them, but after they had waited for me to finish the first lot they would be too impatient to listen. So I had to be satisfied to hold one service. After treating the second group others would come till all were finished. Most of the cases were not seriously ill, but a number needed special treatment, and some required operations. They seemed quite willing to be operated on if we had only had a place in which to take in inpatients. A few were old friends whom we had treated in Busrah, and almost all knew of the Busrah medical work. For this reason they were eager for treatment and were very grateful. Some who were able to pay did so, and during the three weeks the fees from the men's and women's medical work amounted to forty dollars. As no operations were done, and only a few medical calls were made, it seemed as if medical work at Amara could soon be made self-supporting. Some were quite willing to pay for operations. But it did not seem fair to operate on them when he had no one to nurse them afterward, and no proper place in which to care for them. So we told them to go to Dr. Bennett at the Busrah hospital, if we should not be appointed to Amara for next year.

A WATER CARRIER IN ARABIA

The people were so friendly and kind. We planned to visit all the women that we could in their homes. We were received cordially and enjoyed the visits very much. Toward the end of our stay many invitations were received to visit different women patients in their homes, but our time was too limited to accept many of them.

At one home we were very interested to meet a Turkish woman who

had been in Tripoli before the Italian war began. Then they went to Constantinople and were married and her husband had been appointed to a post in Amara. They had been there only six weeks. Now their appointment had been changed to Busrah, and they were leaving in a few days. Her stepdaughter was a beautiful little Turkish girl, as fair as most European children, with gray eyes and brown hair and pink cheeks. We hoped that she could be persuaded to attend the girls' school in Busrah, but although we went to see her several times while we were at annual meeting, we could not overcome her apparent timidity enough to even persuade her to visit the school. Her mother and father know how to read and they seemed to want the child to go to school, but the Eastern custom is to never force a child to do what it does not wish to, so she may continue to lead a very lonely life at home while she might be having such a good time in school and learning day by day. Another very interesting Turkish woman was very fair, with blue eyes. She was fairer than most Americans. She was from Constantinople, and could read Turkish, and we afterward sent her a Gospel. She seemed so glad that a woman doctor had come to Amara, as she said that when a woman was sick there the women of the place knew nothing to do for her and of course she could not go to the Turkish man doctor.

The people all seemed very eager to have an American man doctor come to Amara, and wished to get up a big petition from all the chief people of the place to send to the annual meeting, asking that we be appointed there. We discouraged this, fearing that if the request were not granted it would embitter them. But we felt that there was a very good opportunity for medical work in Amara, and if a doctor were stationed there no doubt many of the Bedouin Arabs would come into touch with the Mission's work, as so many of them come to do their trading in Amara.

It was with real regret that we said good-by to the place, hoping that it might be our good fortune to be appointed there for the next year.

During our visit to Amara, a telegram suddenly came one day telling of the expected visit of Rev. Frank Eckerson. He came and his visit was a great pleasure. It was very good of him to come so far out of his way to see this out-station and to cheer us up. We shared with him our primitive quarters and Arab food, and he seemed to enjoy it all. We were sorry that he could not stay long enough to take some trip right out among the Arab tribes.

While he was there we were invited to visit the Sabean quarters. The Sabeans are followers of St. John the Baptist. Their occupation is to make beautiful articles of silverware decorated with antimony. The process is a secret. One of the Sabeans, who has been kindly disposed toward the missionaries for some years and says he wishes to be a Christian, invited us to his house. So we went, and after talking with them we had the opportunity to sing a hymn and talk of Jesus to the women and children. There were about thirty of them gathered around. Then the men who were sitting on the other side of the court, gave us some graphaphone music. We were surprised to find that they had some European pieces in the collection. Refreshments were then served, consisting of fresh warm milk, sweetened.

We were so encouraged by seeing how many children there were in this quarter that we determined that the next Sunday we would try to start a Sunday school there. But it was impossible, as we were called out at the time set for Sunday school to see a very sick patient. Each day we tried to find time to go, but it was not till Friday that we had the opportunity. When we went we had such a nice time with the children, and some of the Sabean boys learned the first verse of Jesus Loves Me, in Arabic, very quickly. So we went again on the next Sabbath and had a nice Sunday school. Some of the boys then learned the second verse. The Sabean man promised to gather them together after we went and to continue to teach them more of the hymn.

May the love of Jesus soon take possession of the hearts of all in Amara and in all Arabia.

The Arab Woman's Dress

Miss Sarah L. Hosmon, *M.D.*

The woman's number of the Neglected Arabia will not be complete without an article on the fashions of the Arab women. She is most fortunate in not having to alter the model of her clothes, for her fashions do not change, although they vary some in different localities. So if she moves from Bahrein to Busrah she will dress a little different from the women of Bahrein. The same thing will also occur if she moves to Kuweit or Maskat. Since I have been only among the Bahrein women I shall write about them.

At first I did not think their dresses were pretty because they are made of such loud and contrasting colors. But after I had been here sometime on this desert island, where we do not see any colors, I learned to admire the women's dresses very much. Of course, you know they do not show their gowns on the streets. If they are outside their houses they wear long black capes or cloaks that cover their heads as well as their bodies. They all have the one solid appearance of black out in public.

The Arab woman's wardrobe is in direct proportion to her husband's social rank and his finances. Perhaps you will be interested in knowing how the wealthy woman dresses. When she is completely attired she hasn't as many pieces of clothing as the western woman. I should here explain I am describing her as she dresses in the winter season only.

She wears about five pieces of clothing when she has completed her toilette. First she wears a "sirwall" or pantaloons that are long and tapering down over her ankles. These are sometimes of silk or satin. The ankles are finished off by bands of silver embroidered work that make a pretty trimming. Over this she wears a "distasha" which is a plain close-fitting gown with high neck and long, tight sleeves. It is narrow in width and the length is near to the ankles. The sleeves have pretty broad cuffs of silver braid-work, some pretty

pasamentry trimmings which their husbands bring them from Bombay. The neck has no collar but it is stitched very neatly with three or four rows of stitching. The distasha is also of one color only. However she often wears a "sirwall" of bright blue satin and a "distasha" of a red satin. Above the "distasha" she wears a long loose flowing gown called "thobe." It is rather difficult for me to tell you how to cut a pattern of their "thobes." They are long with a train in the back. They are not very wide and are rather straight cut in the body of them. They too are without collars but neatly stitched or trimmed around the neck and the small opening in front. The most striking part about these thobes are their immense sleeves. The length of the sleeves extend to the end of the fingers and they are extremely wide. I have been told they are three yards wide. They are cut straight and really are like wide parallelograms sewed into the side of the thobe. The women have a certain way of taking the front side of the sleeve and draping it over the opposite side of the head. The head is completely covered by both sleeves in this manner. I know I haven't described clearly this way of draping their sleeves over their heads. But you couldn't do much better, for even after you have seen them do it on your own head you couldn't repeat it correctly without asking for help.

A MASKAT WOMAN

The thobes are not of one color as the distashas are. The upper front and back may be of one color while the sides at the bottom and the sleeves may have big pieces of orange and green sewed into them. They may be of silk but sometimes crossed-barred chiffon is used. I saw a thobe, worn by the daughter of the Sheikh, made of silk and gold material woven together so there was one thread of silk alternating with one thread of gold.

Before the Arab woman completes her toilette she combs her long black shining hair and plaits it into many small long braids. They have from ten to twenty of these small braids and the end of each one is adorned with a silver or gold bangle. The parts in her hair are colored a yellowish red color from henna. This henna she also uses on her finger-nails. Her feet are painted on the toes and soles in the same manner. Moreover she paints her eyebrows and her eye-lashes black.

After all this is done she puts on all her jewelry. She has an abundance of it and it is very expensive because it is all made of the pure heavy gold. But it is rather coarse and clumsy in patterns and designs. She wears rings on all her fingers and thumbs. Her bracelets are a pair for each wrist. Then there are big heavy anklets, nose rings, sometimes earrings, and plenty of necklaces. At least three or four, one that fits closely around the neck while the other two or three are long enough to reach the waist line.

When she has adorned herself completely with her jewels she dresses in another part of her clothing called the milpha. This is a thick black veiling used as a scarf which she drapes over her head and leaves one end loose in front to put over her face if a man meets her unexpectedly. Over the milpha she drapes the sleeves of her thobe. She is now ready to receive her guests. But in the house of the Sheikh the Sheikha wears an abba or cloak over her thobe. While the other women do not until they go out of their houses, then they wear black abbas. The abbas are all black trimmed in gold needlework. They are very pretty. The Sheikhas sometimes wear white ones made of white sicilian cloth. The sides of the front and the top are bordered with some red broadcloth or braid. Along this red border there is much heavy gold needlework. This needlework culminates into two large long gold tassels which hang from the sides at about the waistline.

A MASKAT WOMAN

The wealthy women have a large supply of such outfits. Each one is from fifty dollars to two hundred dollars. I am not including in this estimate their jewelry which sometimes reaches exorbitant prices, I have not mentioned shoes or stockings. A few use stockings but not all of them. They wear some pretty toe slippers when they have to go out into their court ways. But they never use shoes inside their rooms.

The Arab Woman's Story of the Arabian Mission

Mrs. G. D. Van Peursem

Last summer we treated in the Mason Memorial Hospital a woman who became so attached to the place that after she was cured she would not leave us. She was full of humor and could amuse us all by her funny expressions. One evening while the patients, nurse Zakkia and I were sitting on the veranda enjoying the cool evening breeze, Shahraban got up from her sitting position, threw her hands up in the air and laughed the loudest laugh I ever heard from a Moslem woman. I asked her what the joke was. "I was just thinking," she said, "of how I used to be afraid of you people at first, while now I trust no one more than you. It is all because of our ignorance."

Then she proceeded to give an account of the history of the Arabian Mission as she saw and knew it, and an interesting account of a Christmas celebration.

"You know," she says, "at first there was only a Sahib (gentleman) here. Everybody hated him because he was a Christian and came here to make us Christians. People used to say that he had medicines to make people Christians. So nobody wanted to drink the medicines he gave. I tried very hard to see him one day (in fact, all the women did). He was coming up the street, and as he turned around the corner I only saw his hat and I was so frightened that I ran into the house, locked the door tight, and my heart went dug, dug, dug hard for almost a whole day. After a while the Sahib got very lonesome, and he sent for his wife. He went to get her, I don't know where—in Busrah or Baghdad, somewhere far away. They lived in a small house on the seashore, and were awfully poor at first. Then the children came and they gradually got richer and richer. You must know how, I don't know whether they inherited money or how, but as they got richer others came. Others came and went and came and went, until now you are quite a few. What you ought to do is, all of you stay right here, some live in this part of the town and others at the other end and still others in the center so that all people would get acquainted with you. I remember when they began to build this hospital. But my, what a lot of talk it caused in the harems. Some said, 'They will take our children in there and kill them.' Others, 'They will give us poisonous medicines.' Others who had become acquainted with the Khatun knew better. After the hospital was finished they built other houses, school and church.

"One year at your feast time the Khatun invited us to her house and some women wanted me to go with them. I never dared enter her home before. I can yet feel how my heart throbbed and how I trembled from fear. But I went. As I entered the room I thought I was going insane. What did I see but a tree, full of lights glowing on it, and all kinds of shiny things. Everything began to dance before my eyes, and I did not know whether I was alive or dead. Such a fear seized me that I stood stiff for a moment. Then I turned around and ran as fast as I could to my house. That night I could not sleep, but imagined seeing that tree with little fires growing out of its branches following me."

She continued: "Have you ever seen one? Are they real? Do they grow in London? Oh, yes. I will come to see your tree this year. I will not run away. You can blindfold me now, and lead me anywhere you please. I'll follow. Praise God, I have learned to know and trust you all. Any medicine you give me, I'll drink without fear. Even if you were to tell me that it would make me a Christian, I would drink it just the same. For surely the Christians are the best people. And if God wills I'll become a Christian."

This poor woman is one out of many in whom fear was changed to trust and hatred to love. May she and the many others soon experience a complete change of heart, so that Christ may take the place of Mohammed.

A School of Hopelessness

Mrs. John Van Ess

A few days ago my head Arabic teacher and I went to pay an official call at the Busrah Government School for Girls. This has recently been reopened, with a Turkish instructress from Constantinople added to its staff, and, as it is the only government school for girls in the province, and accordingly our only rival for the Moslem pupils (the Jewish and Catholic schools are only for the children of their own congregations), we were very anxious to see it. True, there are thousands of little girls in Busrah and there is room for many more than two schools, or three or four; but the demand for education is slight, and a Moslem school might interfere seriously with our growth at this juncture. Three of our most faithful pupils of last year have been taken away from us and sent there, so that they may study the Koran and avoid the Bible—and who knows how many more are going to follow? So with almost painful interest and anticipation my young Mardin teacher, "Muallimat" Khatoon and I threaded our way one afternoon through the crowded dirty back streets, under the pilotage of our old doorkeeper, "Mother of Jassem," a character in herself, who loves nothing better than to escort and be somebody in the highways and byways of Busrah on such calls and errands. We had considerable trouble in finding the place and tried several wrong doors before we met a little girl coming out of a hole in the wall in one of the narrowest, darkest alleys I have ever seen, even in Busrah, and were told by her that this was the school. We pushed the little door open and with great difficulty ascended a crooked, crazy staircase whose steps were so worn and crumbling and steep that I wonder the little girls do not break their necks on them, and finally emerged on an uneven mud roof enclosed with toppling board fences. Over at the left, somewhat after the manner of a deckhouse perched on a deck, was a little room to which we picked our steps. It was built of mud bricks, unplastered either within or without, the floor was deep with dust and dirt, the small windows so thickly coated with cobwebs that it was impossible to see out, and the only furniture was a row of high benches around three sides. In one corner sat a hard-

THE DOORKEEPER, "MOTHER OF JASSEM" WITH TWO OF HER CHARGES

featured common-looking woman, the Arabic teacher; before her on the disreputable benches twelve little girls—and this was the school! This was the sole provision of the sublime Turkish government for the higher education of women in Busrah province, said to be the richest province in the whole of Turkey.

The Arabic teacher welcomed us very cordially, deplored the fact that the Turkish teacher, the lady from Stamboul, was out for the afternoon, and after the customary exchange of polite remarks we said that we should like to hear the children recite their lessons. Our three ex-pupils were peeping at us from over the tops of their books, and subsided into giggles when they heard our request. The teacher seemed very loath to have her charges "show off," no doubt because they were so little able to do so to advantage, as we soon saw, and the only really interesting thing we heard was the reading of the Koran. The children swayed their bodies to and fro and read in the high-pitched, chanting voice considered proper for the rendering of the sacred words, not one of which they probably understood. My teacher, Muallimat Khatoon, whispered to me in English, "Oh, how *can* these girls be willing to come here after they have been in a nice school like ours?" And I replied: "Poor little things, I don't know." We inquired about the curriculum and found that, besides Koran, the girls study Mohammedan tradition, arithmetic of a sort, and a number of subjects in Turkish—which is of course more or less Greek to them. They also are taught some needle work, of a rather crude native sort. Order there is none, and apparently results are none. When we took our leave the teacher apologized for the dirt, disorder, and the stupidity of the girls, and assured us that it was a thankless task to try to teach Busrah children.

BUSRAH GIRLS' SCHOOL (at the right)
BOYS' SCHOOL (at the left)

We hurried back as fast as we could to the open streets and the well-built houses along the main creek, and into our own big front door, with the great sign over it, "School of Hope for Girls." The afternoon sun was streaming into the courtyard as we went in and hastened up our nice clean stairs, and in every room there was the sight and sound of busy happy occupation. In my own large tidy white-curtained classroom the little third-class girls were sitting at their comfortable American school desks, studying lessons for the next day, and copying exercises from the blackboard. Over by the piano the big girls were gathered in a laughing group reading over their parts for a little sketch which is to be the "piece de resistance" at our next entertainment for the mothers. In the next room a class was busily sewing, and in the back classroom the tiniest tots were occupied, while waiting for their big sisters to go home, with "Busy Work Tiles," and bead stringing. Every one, large and small, looked busy and happy, and the

whole atmosphere was as different from that of the forlorn place we had just left as the West is from the East.

These girls, instead of intoning the Koran, are studying the Life of Christ. Instead of reading Mohammedan tradition, they are learning the wonderful structure of the human body, and the care that must be taken of it. They are rediscovering the world in geography class; and they are preparing themselves to be better housewives and mothers in the work that they are learning with hands as well as heads. Of the forty girls now enrolled, they are almost without exception contented in their work and show a natural aptitude for it.

Some wise people tell us that Mohammedanism is best for the Mohammedans, that Christian civilization can never be assimilated by the Orientals, and that they are better off as they are. If such could visit the Turkish Government School for Girls of Busrah, and see where the wives and mothers of the future are being trained, and then could come and compare with it our "School of Hope," I wonder if they would continue to think as they do? I wonder?

Pen Pictures of Women's Medical Work. Busrah

Mrs. A. K. Bennett.

"Welcome, welcome, Khatun, here we are," I hear myself accosted thus as I am about to ascend the veranda steps at the Hospital, and turn to greet two River Arab women, mother and daughter evidently, the latter with a flat tarred basket on her head. They are both robust and hardy, with sun-browned faces, clad in brown home-spun abbas, patched here and there, barefooted, the younger woman with thick plain silver anklets. "Here we are, we have brought her to you" saying which they by united manoeuver, deposit the basket on the veranda. There is a curled-up bundle on one side, and on the other a dish of cooked rice. I ask what they have there. "Why it's the baby, we have brought her to you"—and the older woman pours out a tale of how her daughter has had numerous children, apparently healthy enough, but who have died successively for no known reason. So they have come that I may see this one and perhaps give the mother medicine so that the child may grow up and not die. A fat sleeping infant, large for three months, is disclosed on unwrapping the nondescript bundle; she is apparently cheerful and happy, lacking nothing. Advice is given and cheerfully received, and my last glimpse of the group shows the basket again poised on the mother's head, the baby crying lustily at being consigned to oblivion once more.

II. I am seated at my desk on a clinic morning, an Arab woman comes in when her name is called; she is the wife of a tiller of the soil on one of the large estates down the river belonging to a prominent Busrah man. Her veil lifted, I see a sweet patient face, somewhat anxious, and showing traces of illness. She is polite in her manner, and uses good language in telling her trouble. On examination I find that she is suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis in the early stages, but

of a fairly active type. I prescribe for her and direct her carefully as to eating, manner of life, etc. She listens intelligently, and notes each point, promising to do as told. As I finish she breaks forth with appeal in her eyes, "Khatun, Oh, Khatun, shall I get well? My daughter is already weeping for me as for one surely going to die. Five others in our family have gone before me of the same disease." I can but tell her to carry out my directions faithfully and with good courage trusting in God who gives healing. She is one of many who come for treatment for this dread disease; so often it is a losing fight with them and they know it, hence it takes strong faith and courage to persevere.

III. Here is a young girl in the women's ward. Her mother is black, but the girl shows a large mixture of Arab blood. In her own words she says,—"I fell from the stairs, for five days I could walk, then my knee began to hurt and I cast myself upon my bed and lay down. I will be your slave, I will kiss your feet if you will make me well." A large destructive abscess had formed, the bone of the thigh had been destroyed, and amputation seemed unavoidable. But the mother begged me to wait and see if it would not get well with present treatment. The girl has the fortitude of an older woman, and seldom cries out during the painful manipulations of dressing. One day I was told that she was crying and sobbing after I left her. I returned and sought to comfort her, asking if I had hurt her. "No, no, it is not that, but I am thinking that it will not get well, and I shall never walk again. My mother cries over me, and I can not bear it." Her sobs are soon stilled and she smiles through tears. Another day I gave her a doll to while away the long hours. A little later I asked her what she was going to call it, thinking she would give it some common name. She said, smiling brightly, "I'll call her 'Light of my face.'" The child has a sweet vein of poetry in her nature, and shows a depth of feeling and imagination quite unexpected in one of her class.

IV. In a rattly carriage over bumpy muddy roads, and after threading my way carefully down a narrow lane, I arrive finally at the home of a patient I have hitherto treated in the dispensary only. She is the wife of a Persian merchant, a delicate, tired little person but usually cheerful and hopeful withal. I find her stretched on her comfortable pallet in the middle of the best room of the house, a huge wadded counterpane over her and a charcoal brazier radiating heat beside her. Her two boys, equally her torment and pride are there with her, as also her husband, whom I see for the first time. She has a little fever only, but is greatly cast down and worried, for her time is not far off and she fears that she may die as did her dear sister a year ago. A few minutes of quiet talk with her, reassuring her that all is well and that she has no cause at all to worry, calms and restores her to a peaceful frame of mind. And I go away feeling that although my excursion in the inclement weather was not needed so greatly medically, it was decidedly worth while to bring comfort to a troubled heart which had learned to trust me.

V. One of the private rooms is occupied by a young Jewess, a gentle timid woman, once very pretty, but now thin and wasted from

a long illness. She is making a slow but steady recovery after an operation which was absolutely necessary, but from which she shrank with unnamed horror until the last moment. She had to be coaxed, petted, scolded, frightened into it, and was induced to undergo it finally by my saying that she must leave the Hospital and that I would treat her no further otherwise. But now she is happy and grateful, and returning hope of life is beginning to give a fresher color to her sallow face. It takes peculiar patience to deal with this race, any one of whom Friday evening after sunset will not strike a match or hold a light or lift a finger to help in the treatment of one ill.

VI. I am called for by a retainer to visit the wife of one of the Sheikhs of Zobeir. I have previously seen her in her home and she has come to Busrah for necessary treatment. I am somewhat surprised at this for the Sheikh himself told me it would be impossible for various reasons for her to stay in Busrah. Before entering the house the man informs me that it will be desirable for me to complete her cure in six days as that is the longest that the Sheikh can allow her to remain. I am ushered into a large room only partly furnished, as they are camping so to speak. Rich rugs and gold-embroidered pillows give it an air of luxury however. My patient, a portly lady, comes forward to greet me smilingly. We sit down and she tells me that she has come to undergo the treatment I advised: having overruled her husband's objections, and gained her way. "The Bey says, I must return in six days; we will stay six days, then I will write him and tell him that I am going to stay six days more." She says this with an air of mischievous assurance not usually seen, even among the women of the higher classes. We became good friends during the days that follow, she is a pleasant acquaintance, as well as a good patient; her happy confidence speeds her cure. She goes back to Zobeir after something more than six days, restored to her health. Her return is hastened by a peremptory order from her husband; she would like to stay longer, but even she dare not disobey a direct order.